

In the 1880s, colonies sprang up in St. Cloud, Florian (originally Stanisławowo), Gniezno, and Wilno. An Immigration Society promoted settlement in northwestern Minnesota in 1896. In the 1890s, they reached Sturgeon Lake, Owatonna, Grygla, New Brighton, Willow River, and Cloquet. By 1904, there were some 60 Polish settlements in the state. The map on page 20 identifies the earliest locations mentioned.

Polish immigration in Minnesota peaked in 1914, and then decreased due to World War I, virtually to zero after 1920. In 1930, the major concentrations of Poles were to be found in the population centers of Hennepin, Ramsey, and St. Louis counties.

Poles established their own Polish parishes and fraternal and insurance organizations wherever they settled. However, many did not completely sever their ties with their native land. Perhaps as many as 10% chose to re-emigrate and return to Poland. Those that stayed proved to be good U.S. citizens. It was not difficult for Poles, then without a country, to renounce their allegiance to the Emperors of Prussia or Austria or to the Tsar of Russian, as my grandfather did in 1918 his Declaration of Intention. He had arrived in New York on the third voyage of the ill-fated *Lusitania*, where he worked as a fireman. On the declaration he gave his birthplace as Kalusen, Russia—now

Kałużyn, Poland. Poles always were ready to serve their adopted country in times of war. While constituting only 4% of the population of the United States, they suffered 12% of the World War II dead. In the 1948–1953 time frame, about 3,000 Polish Displaced Persons (known as DPs) settled in Minnesota.⁹ In the 2000 census, 223,000 Minnesotans and about nine million in the United States indicated they were of Polish ancestry.¹⁰

Editor—This article is reprinted with permission from the Summer 2004 issue of the *Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota Newsletter*. Sadly, the author, John Kowles died not long ago; his widow, Mary, kindly gave us permission to reprint it. I want to thank Rosalie Lindberg, who noticed this article and suggested we reprint it because of its relevance to all descendants of Polish immigrants, not just those living in Minnesota. Rosalie and I both want to thank Paul Kulas, who was editor of the PGS-MN *Newsletter* when the article was published; Peggy Larson, the current editor; and John Rys, all of whom assisted us in getting the material together. *Dziękujemy uprzejmie!*

⁹ Edward Reimer Brandt, "Polish Immigration and Polish-American Genealogical Resources," *Minnesota Genealogist* (June, 1993).

¹⁰ Jagoda Urbab-Kraehn, *Polish Culture* (can be found at <<http://bellaonline.com>>). 🌸

OUR TRIP TO POLAND, JUNE 9–24, 2011

Josephine Welsch

Editor—Josephine submitted this account of her trip, and we thought many of you would enjoy reading it. But I should point out that you can read the first three installments of it, along with many good photos, at <<http://blog.polishorigins.com/2012/03/09/my-big-fat-polish-trip/>>.

June 9

My son, Steve, and I left our house around 9:15 a.m. and arrived at the Cleveland airport at 9:50 a.m. We checked our baggage straight through to Warsaw. Our flight took us to JFK airport in New York City where we would change to a LOT plane.

The flight to New York was okay, 1½ hrs. At JFK we were taken to the International Terminal by Airport Van Transportation Service.

Upon our arrival at the international terminal, there was no one to help with carry-on baggage and the walk to the LOT

ticket counter was hard. When we arrived at the ticket counter, the line was already very long—winding around posts, like waiting in line to buy a ticket to a sports game.

Finally got our boarding passes and went to the proper gate (this time with help and wheelchairs) made it with about half an hour to boarding. The takeoff was delayed nearly three hours due to rain and lightning. Once in the air, there was so much turbulence we felt like we were on a roller coaster (up-down/side to side).

June 10

Arrived three hours late in Warsaw.

Polish guide and researcher Michał Marciniak met us at the baggage claim area at 11:45 a.m.

Michał took us to the Holiday Inn Hotel, where Steve and I rested for the rest of the day. Breakfast was not included in the price of the room.

June 11

Michał drove us to Tarnów to meet with Zenon Znamirowski. On the way there I got car-sick even though I was sitting in the front seat. The curving roads felt like another roller coaster.

Arrived at the Ranczo Palomino Inn and met Zenon, then rested and unpacked (our stay was for 5-6 days). While we were unpacking, Stanisław Dulian, my 5th cousin on my grandfather's mother's side, came to the inn. He brought a beautiful bouquet of flowers to welcome us to Poland, and invited us to a Polish wedding. We went with him to the Wedding Mass and then to the reception.

We witnessed a custom after the mass that I found quite interesting and silly at the time. When the bride and groom leave the church, there are children and adults called gatekeepers. A rope is strewn across the road and in order to pass the couple must give a donation, either money or vodka. There were at least 15 gatekeepers and at one point the volunteer fire department put their truck in the way. Needless to say, the lead car gave them three bottles of vodka.

Stanisław is not the person I pictured. I expected a quiet, reserved individual. On the contrary, he was full of fun and information and very easy to get along with. He helped Steve up and down the stairs at the wedding reception, on the cobblestone walks (and there are a lot of them).

Now, the wedding reception was a blast. The food, what can I say? It was fantastic, delicious, and very filling. The meal started off with the traditional soup made with angel hair

noodles, chicken broth, carrots, potatoes, and parsnips. The entrée consisted of boiled potatoes with parsley, fried veal cutlet, beef of some sort, (what they call a sausage, Americans call a hot dog), three small bowls with sides of cole slaw, puréed pickled beets and cucumbers with sour cream. Dessert was wedding cake. After that came hot beef and sausage soup (regular sausage), platters of ham, beef, chicken, rye bread, butter, and a plate of fried chicken. Bottles of drinks, Pepsi, orange, apple juice, and beer were on the tables. Pitchers of apple juice and orange juice, beer, and the vodka came later.

The wedding planner was a very vocal person, joyful, fun. There was a part of the reception when the bride and groom and wedding planner went from table to table and sang a little ditty about particular persons. And then they came to us. It seems the bride is a 5th cousin to us on the Soboń side of the family. The wedding couple was informed by Stanisław of our relationship to them and why we were in Poland so "our" song reflected that.

In Poland the wedding rings are worn on the ring finger of the right hand. Very simple, very plain gold bands, unless you are one of the elite and can afford fancy rings.

This part of the trip was enjoyable, with one exception: the smell at Ranczo Palomino. If you live on a ranch or in the country and are used to the smell of hay and hors-



A photo of Ranczo Palomino, courtesy of the author.

es, then I guess it is okay. The beds were very hard and uncomfortable.

[Editor—If you're interested, Ranczo Palomino, or as we would say, Rancho Palomino, has a Web site at <<http://www.lubera.pl>>.]

June 12

Zenon stayed at the Ranczo Palomino with us. Here, again, breakfast was not included in the price of the rooms.

We met with the family of Stanisław Dulian, my cousin. Stanisław's mother was at home and when she heard that we finally made it, she was so happy to meet us that she gave me a very big hug and started to cry. She was very glad to meet someone from the United States. Stanisław's mother is a vibrant woman for 91 years of age. Stanisław's wife made soup, turkey, pureed pickled beets, potatoes, carrots, etc.

Afterwards, Stanisław took us to five or six cemeteries where we found and recorded family burial sites.

June 13

Drove to Jodłówka-Walki and met with the Kuta families. Maria Nytko in Jodłówka is my 5th cousin on my grandmother, Mary Kuta's, side of the family. We had a wonderful time with them, and they took us to Maria's parents' home, where we took photos and visited with them for a while. Maria's parents still live on a farm and they are in their 90s! Maria gave me a tablecloth for my family's Busia Zugaj picnic. (My grandfather's name was Józef Zugaj, and his mother was Marianna Soboń.)

We spent many hours and film on cemeteries, churches and other items. While in Jasło we saw the ancient gothic church. There are so many beautiful old churches in Poland. The country side, homes, and roads are very beautiful, long and winding.

June 14

We drove to Tarnów and visited the Gypsy Museum (Muzeum Cygańskie). Then we drove to Zalipie. This village is noted for its famous painted buildings: houses, churches, dog houses, wheelbarrows, barns, and so on. If you are anywhere near this village, you must see it.

The area around Tarnów has many ranches to visit or to go riding (Dude Ranches). While we were there we visited the Virgin Mary Church and the cathedral/basilica.

June 15

Went to Kraków for the day. We visited the old market square. Cobblestone and rocky roads were bad on Steve's feet and my hip and legs; uphill most of the time. In the old square we visited the Cathedral of St. Mary and Cloth Hall which contains jewelry, dolls, toys, leather goods, a lot of gold and amber. It is a huge building. I picked up some souvenirs for family back home. I couldn't find any St. Jude medals. I do not think they know anything about St. Jude because when we asked, they looked at us as if to say "WHO?"

Had some lunch at an outdoor restaurant, watched the pigeons, and basically looked at some of the shops. If in good health, one could stay in Kraków all day and not see everything.

On our way back to Tarnów and the ranch we stopped at a doll museum/manufacturer in Jasło, but it was closed; so we drove to a nearby doll museum, which was connected with the first. It was set up like what Poland looked like in the very early years in miniature. In another section were fairy tale stories in miniature as well: Snow White, Red Riding Hood, and other stories. After a full day of walking and enjoying the sights, we drove back to the ranch in Tarnów.

June 16

Left for Warsaw in the morning, stopping only for water and gas. We all had dinner at the Holiday Inn where we spent the night again. I had to wash some laundry by hand.

June 17

We headed straight for Toruń and took many photos, saw the Copernicus house and his statue, bought a small snow globe of said person, found some very delicious gingerbread, and also what I thought was another fabulous church turned out to be the city hall in the middle of the square. Went to the Tourist Inn, had some dinner (cold cuts, cheese, the usual) tried to sleep on the so-called bed (hard as a rock)—so I slept in a chair which proved to be more comfortable than the bed. In the morning, we had breakfast which consisted of (yes we guessed it), then left for Poznań, which was 157 km one-way, a three-hour drive.

One will also see many storks nesting on top of homes, poles and anywhere they

<http://pl.org/wiki/wojew%C5>



A painted stove in Zalipie. This image, along with others at <[http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zalipie_\(wojew%C3%B3dztwo_ma%C5%82opolskie\)](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zalipie_(wojew%C3%B3dztwo_ma%C5%82opolskie))> was made available for use by the author under the terms of a Creative Commons License.

want. An old saying goes, “If a stork is nesting near your home, you may be expecting a baby.”

In the countryside/farm areas, the children in the U.S.A. would never make it. There is a lot of walking, and I do mean a **lot**. Children walk for miles to get to school and back home. The very young to the very old ride bicycles.

When one starts out on a long drive, he/she better have a full tank of petrol.

June 18

The day started out very dismal, with intermittent showers all the way to Poznań. On our way to Poznań, we went through Dębno and saw a Gothic castle, a very beautiful building. Lisia Góra is another fascinating village we passed through with all of its churches and other buildings such as the church in Łukowa.

When we arrived in Poznań, it was bitter cold and wet; we did not get to see much because of the rain. We had lunch at a quaint restaurant and then did some sightseeing. Took a few photos. In Poznań,

we visited the old square, City Hall National Museum and a windmill farm (power mills). We had dinner at the Agrotourist Inn, where we also spent the night.

I used up all five disposable cameras; total number of pictures, 135. Then I started using my digital camera. It seemed whenever I tried to take a photo, Zenon would speed up and pass the car in front of us; so I missed a few good photos. The land here is very beautiful, untouched by buildings, stores, homes, it is quite open, a lot of farming, cows in the field doing their thing, Construction everywhere, building new and improving the roads.

All in all, Poland is a beautiful country (just stay away from the big cities). We traveled approximately 1400-1700 km. Poles do eat a large quantity of potatoes, vegetables, non-processed lunchmeats, cheese, and bread, lots and lots of butter (no margarine to be found anywhere).

June 19

We drove back to the Holiday Inn in Warsaw, had laundry service and rested. Zenon did not stay with us when we were at the Holiday Inn. He lives in Warsaw so he went home to his family.

June 20

We tried to see the Syrena (mermaid) statue but the section was under reconstruction. We did manage to see the statue from a distance protected by the remodelers. Then we went to the Science and Cultural Building. We took the elevator to the top floor and boy was it windy—but well worth the view. Zenon also drove us around the small villages outside of Warsaw. We finally found the St. Jude medals. Steve and I had dinner at the Holiday Inn and enjoyed eating something besides cheese.

June 21

There were several other places we would like to have seen, but weather played a part in not seeing everything I wanted. We didn't do anything on this day, just relaxed and used the hotel's laundry service.

June 22

We stayed in our room and ordered room service and did some packing, and, all in all, just rested before our long journey home. Steve and I had a great time in Poland, enjoyed all the wonderful sights, the

rivers, buildings, and especially the beautiful and old churches.

June 23

Zenon took us to the airport and we were the first ones in line at LOT. Everything went really fast with what we had to do, screening, etc. Our plane was to leave at 12:30 p.m. and the roads were so empty we made it to LOT fast and after all the inspections and passports and things that had to be done we found ourselves three hours early so we sat and waited and enjoyed the scenery and all the people going to different countries.

No, I did not get the seats I reserved back in November. They would not say why. So Steve and I sat in Row 30, seats E & F (aisle seats again) just like going to Poland, seats so small and cramped it was very, very uncomfortable for a nine-hour flight.

On the way we flew over Greenland, and were the Polish people happy to see snow!

The LOT flight was held up for landing due to many planes lined up to taxi for takeoff. What a feeling to be held up in the air waiting an hour and a half to land.

We arrived in New York in the p.m. and needed to stay overnight at a hotel and leave there at 4:00 a.m. on June 24 to catch a plane departing at 6:20 a.m. to arrive in Charlotte at 8:30 a.m.

Once on the ground at JFK, so many check points to go thru, customs, another x-ray (not the strip x-ray). There were two or three of them. One was at Customs, after you picked up your luggage at the baggage claim.

Managed to get to the pickup area for the Howard Johnson's van, made it to the hotel and when I saw this place, I definitely would not recommend it (this particular one) it had to be a knock off of the real one. It was in the seedy part of town (Queens). Never again.

June 24

At 4:30 a.m. I called a cab and we made it to the airport in seven minutes. Then all hell broke loose.

When we arrived at the U.S. Airways terminal at JFK, there were a couple of curbside men checking in luggage. When I asked them about wheelchairs, and told them we were on U.S. Air, they told me to go to the desk at the end. They did not offer to help us carry our luggage to the desk, and

they saw us struggling with them. The curbside service people saw that we needed help and did nothing, I consider them rude, obnoxious, discourteous, and a few other choice words.

Finally made it to the U.S. Airways desk and told the girl there about wheelchairs. She was very kind and understood. Wheelchair Assistance open at 5 a.m. We were on the list for the first one. After that it was sheer HELL. I do not know what the problem with the attendant was, but I have never been mistreated by wheelchair attendants in the past. This one was VERY rude and I have the bruises to prove it. I may even sue the airline.

AT HOME

BOY, am I glad to be home, if I ever decide to go again I will take a straight through flight on another airline. Now I need to get hold of the LOT and ask a few questions.

As for the gentlemen I dealt with in Poland, Mr. Michal Marciniak and Mr. Zenon Znamirowski are two of the best researchers/tour guide/translators that anyone could ever ask for. I met Michal Marciniak when I was searching in 2008 for family in Poland, He is the person who found them all. When Michał was not available for our tour, he suggested Zenon Znamirowski and all turned out okay.

They are both young men, age 38, married and with children. They are loyal to their wives and I am glad for that.

I know about Zenon and his eating habits. He eats A LOT. I don't know how he can put it all away and still stay slim. I was amazed at how much he could eat at one sitting.

Michał, I do not know much about his habits, but we were treated with respect. They are two great guys. Zenon took Steve under his wing and helped him on the gravel walks and roads also the cobblestone walks.

And before I forget, we did visit the Royal Castle in Kraków and Chopin's Rose Garden. When sightseeing in Poland you will see 95% of the people carrying bottles of water. The water in the big cities is fine. I am told that Poles, like Americans are just used to drinking bottled water. When one wants to order bottle of water they are asked gas /no gas (carbonated/non-carbonated). ☺